



# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

One Natural Resources Way Springfield, Illinois 62702-1271  
<http://dnr.state.il.us>

Pat Quinn, Governor  
Marc Miller, Director

May 24, 2010

Mr. Dennis Valentine, Village Manager  
Village of Valmeyer  
626 S. Meyer Avenue  
P.O. Box 262  
Valmeyer, IL 62295

**Re: Salt Lick Point Land & Water Reserve Hole Closure and Berm Creation Project over Rock City – Valmeyer**  
**Endangered Species Consultation Program**  
**Project Number: 1008311**  
**County: Monroe**

Dear Mr. Valentine:

This letter concerns the above-referenced project that was submitted to EcoCAT for consultation in accordance with the *Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act* [520 ILCS 10/11], the *Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act* [525 ILCS 30/17], and Title 17 *Illinois Administrative Code*, Part 1075. The project is located within the boundaries of **Salt Lick Point Land and Water Reserve (LWR)**, north/northwest of the parking area to Rock City, an abandoned limestone mine, in Township 3 South, Range 11 West, Section 3.

The EcoCAT report lists the following protected natural areas as in the vicinity of this project: **Columbia Hill Prairie Illinois Natural Area Inventory (INAI) Site; Potato Hill Natural Area INAI Site and Natural Heritage Landmark (NHL); Luella Schaefer Memorial Hill Prairies LWR; Martha and Michelle Prairies LWR; Snakey Acres NHL; and Salt Lick Point LWR.**

The project is also within the vicinity of the following protected species:

State-listed endangered

**Crested Coralroot Orchid**, *Hexalectris spicata*

**Whitlow Grass**, *Draba cuneifolia*

**Wooly Buckthorn**, *Bumelia lanuginosa*

Although not listed on the EcoCAT report, the likelihood exists that the State-listed endangered **Great Plains Rat Snake**, *Pantherophis emoryi*, is also within the vicinity of this project.

State-listed threatened

**Missouri Orange Coneflower**, *Rudbeckia missouriensis*

**Eastern Narrowmouth Toad**, *Gastrophryne carolinensis*

**Flathead Snake**, *Tantilla gracilis*

**Timber Rattlesnake**, *Crotalus horridus*

The project involves repairing two holes (airshafts) and a leaking ceiling crevasse, within three different areas, via four separate repairs to prevent water from the Salt Lick LWR, situated above the mine, from leaking underground onto a storage area used by the National Archives Records Center for military records.

- The first action will involve repairing a leaking airshaft by installing metal rebar 2' below the surface and using concrete to seal the hole (Area 1 – hole no. 28). Next, a berm will be installed to act as a catch basin, and piping will be installed to route the water about 30' to prevent further erosion. Berm installation will require the use of a small excavator (Bobcat 324 Compact Excavator).
- The second action involves digging a 46" ditch in a Y-shape to create two small berms (catch basins) so that water can then be piped past the airshaft towards the bluff's slope (Area 3 – hole no. 27).
- The third action involves building two catch basins to prevent water currently coming from ceiling crevasses from entering the Archives, and piping the water past the crevasse area to an area which will carry it away because of its location on the bluff slope. Catch basin work will involve the use of a small excavator (Bobcat 324 Compact Excavator).

The Village states in its Detailed Action Report materials that the berms will be covered with erosion control fabric and dirt, and all pipes will be covered with dirt from the project. Further, the Village will require that the shortest possible routes to the project sites will be chosen; discussions with INPC staff clarified that the work involving machinery should take place no farther out from the gravel trail than approximately 100'. It is anticipated that berm work involving machinery should only take one day; all other work should take approximately 1-2 days.

The Department has completed its review of the project and determined that the action may have an adverse impact on the listed plants and listed snake species. To minimize potential impacts, the Department recommends that the following measures be implemented by the developer and incorporated in the Village's project authorization.

#### Listed Plant Species

1. All on-site personnel working on this project should be educated about all of the listed plant species noted above so they are aware of what each looks like. Pictures, in color, should be provided and displayed at the work site.
2. Due to recent periods of high rainfall and to avoid potential severe erosional issues, to lessen the chances of machinery getting stuck, and to lessen potential negative mechanical footprints within the Land and Water Reserve, the Bobcat should only be used with extreme caution, and in drier circumstances, in areas that have been inundated with rain.
3. Before work commences each day, the route that the Bobcat is to take is to be discussed with, and approved by, Deb Newman, INPC Natural Area Preservation Specialist.
4. All actions on the ground at the LWR should occur only under the full oversight of Ms. Newman, or her designee.
5. The Bobcat route to the airshafts should first be visually surveyed for listed plants to avoid running over any protected that may be present.

6. All equipment and protective gear (such as boots), should be power-washed before coming onto the site so that non-native, invasive plants/seeds are not introduced into the LWR.

#### Listed Snake Species

The Department recommends that this project take place during the late fall and winter months (mid-November to mid-March) while the snake species are hibernating, to avoid a potential take of any listed snake species, which is a violation of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act. Take, as defined in the Act, and in reference to animals and animal products, means to harm, hunt, shoot, pursue, lure, wound, kill, destroy, harass, gig, spear, ensnare, trap, capture, collect, or to attempt to engage in such conduct. Direct mortality of snakes can occur from construction activities, on-site personnel, or machinery crushing/running over them. If the work must be done outside of the winter months, or if maintenance activities are to occur at these sites in the future, then the following recommendations should be implemented.

1. All on-site personnel working on this project should be educated about each of the listed snake species noted above so they are aware of what each looks like. Pictures, in color, of juveniles and adults should be provided and displayed at the work site.
2. If possible, all work should be done during the heat of the day since this is when snakes are less likely to be moving about between denning sites and foraging areas.
3. Before work commences each day, the route that the Bobcat is to take is to be discussed with, and approved by, Deb Newman, INPC Natural Area Preservation Specialist.
4. All actions on the ground at the LWR should occur only under the full oversight of Ms. Newman, or her designee. Ms. Newman should be allowed to walk ahead of any machinery to instruct the operator (s) of any snakes on the route to the airshafts. Ms. Newman, or her designee, is the only person who should handle snakes, if any are encountered. If a snake is encountered, then all work must cease immediately and not resume until Ms. Newman, or her designee, have moved the snake out of harm's way.
5. Machinery should avoid driving over rocks and rocky areas that could have snakes hiding underneath, therefore, avoidance of rock areas is strongly recommended.
6. Snakes may be sunning themselves on trails during the duration of this project. Timber rattlesnakes can use small openings and trail edges to bask and gestate young. They also position themselves alongside fallen logs that are being used as mammalian runways since they are 'sit and wait' predators. Fallen logs should be left in place for foraging and shelter. Therefore, extreme caution is warranted by both machine operators and personnel walking trails.
7. The width of the trenches being dug for pipes should be minimized to the extent possible and all trenches should be immediately backfilled.

Consultation on the part of the Department is completed. In accordance with 17 Ill. Adm. Code 1075.40(h), the Village of Valmeyer must notify the Department of its decision regarding these recommendations, whether they will:

- Allow the action to proceed as originally proposed;
- Require the action to be modified per Department recommendations (please specify which measures, if not all will be required); or
- Forgo the action.

This consultation is valid for two years unless new information becomes available that was not previously considered; the proposed action is modified; or additional species, essential habitat, or Natural Areas are identified in the vicinity. If the project has not been implemented within two years of the date of this letter, or any of the above listed conditions develop, a new consultation is necessary.

The natural resource review reflects the information existing in the Illinois Natural Heritage Database at the time of the project submittal, and should not be regarded as a final statement on the site being considered, nor should it be a substitute for detailed site surveys or field surveys required for environmental assessments. If additional protected resources are encountered during the project's implementation, you must comply with the applicable statutes and regulations. Also, note that termination does not imply IDNR's authorization or endorsement of the proposed action.

Should you need additional information regarding the consultation process, or should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cordially,



Kathi Davis  
Impact Assessment Section  
Division of Ecosystems and Environment  
Office of Realty and Environmental Planning  
217-557-0483

Cc: Jenny Skufca, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission  
Debbie Newman, Illinois Nature Preserves Commission  
Marty Kemper, IDNR Division of Natural Heritage  
Scott Ballard, IDNR Division of Natural Heritage  
Stan Yonkauskis, IDNR Office of Legal Counsel